

ASSIGNMENT: *THE GREAT GATSBY* | Sophomore English

Due in Google folder by **9am on February 24, 2020**

Sabrina Sadique

PROMPT 1

At different points in the text, depending on the spectator (remember: **spectacle** and **spectator** are etymologically correlated by the Latin word *spectare*, which means, ‘to gaze at, observe’), Doctor T. J. Eckleburg acquires different meanings (see the gamut of excerpts below). As we have discussed in class, Doctor T. J. Eckleburg—as a signifier—activates a range of symbolic values from the “all-seeing” **panopticon** (secular, social surveillance—who’s watching whom in a hyper class-conscious society?) and **divine omniscience** (Wilson takes Myrtle to the window and regards Eckleburg as God’s eyes) to **postwar capitalism** (billboards create or amplify human lacks and strategically trick you into consuming an idea, sometimes fatally).

With these notions in mind and having parsed the quotes below once more:

- a. *Create and place* a scene at a pertinent point in the text where a different character (**NOT** Nick, Tom, George) views the billboard and engages with it. This creative and descriptive part (**no more than 250 words long**) should be single-spaced, may contain dialogue or monologues, and ideally should blend into Fitzgerald’s prose. Tall order, I know, but you are amply prepared for the task!
- b. Now, in **no more than 1000 words**, *critically* explain your choices. How have you re-framed the spectacles? What symbolic values do they carry? What relationship do they have to the ideas of the panopticon, divine omniscience, and postwar class-consciousness & capitalism? Remember: precision, clarity, and analytic cohesion are your eternal friends. You *may* complement your 3-page assignment with a visual text (a drawing, a flow chart, a concept map).

Evaluation of your essay will depend on the following factors:

1. how **creative the placement of your scene is** and how **critically it engages the major themes of the novel** (class conflict, real vs. Platonic conceptions),
2. how **astutely you have addressed the questions in Part 1b;**
3. how **smooth your transitions are in the creative and analytic components,**
4. how **seamlessly you incorporate and cite lines of *The Great Gatsby*** within the body of your prose,
5. how **syntactically and grammatically coherent** your prose is, and
6. how **clearly and succinctly** (thereby **elegantly!**) **you translate your thoughts into writing.**

Chapter 2

(Nick)

But above the grey land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many countless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground. (23-4)

(Nick)

I followed him over a low white-washed railroad fence and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg’s persistent stare. (24)

(Tom)

We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a grey, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track.

“Terrible place, isn’t it,” said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg. (26)

Chapter 7 (Nick)

We were all irritable now with the fading ale and, aware of it, we drove for a while in silence. Then as Doctor T. J. Eckleburg's faded eyes came into sight down the road, I remembered Gatsby's caution about gasoline. "We've got enough to get us to town," said Tom. "But there's a garage right here," objected Jordan. "I don't want to get stalled in this baking heat." (122)

That locality was always vaguely disquieting, even in the broad glare of afternoon, and now I turned my head as though I had been warned of something behind. **Over the ashheaps the giant eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil but I perceived, after a moment, that other eyes were regarding us with peculiar intensity from less than twenty feet away.** (124)

Chapter 8 (George Wilson)

"I spoke to her," he muttered, after a long silence. "I told her she might fool me but she couldn't fool God. I took her to the window" —with an effort he got up and walked to the rear window and leaned with his face pressed against it,—"and I said 'God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing. You may fool me but you can't fool God!'"

Standing behind him Michaelis saw with a shock that he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg which had just emerged pale and enormous from the dissolving night.

"God sees everything," repeated Wilson.

"That's an advertisement," Michaelis assured him. Something made him turn away from the window and look back into the room. But Wilson stood there a long time, his face close to the window pane, nodding into the twilight. (159-160)

PROMPT 2

Select any **two** of the 11 triangles (see below; you may also propose your own Δ **and** choose one from the given list) and explore:

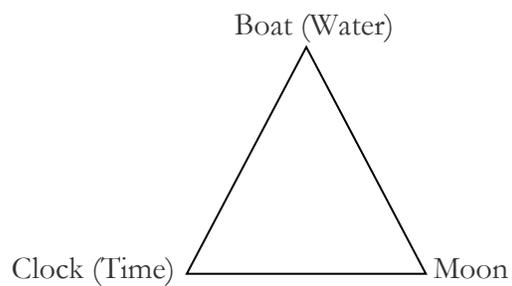
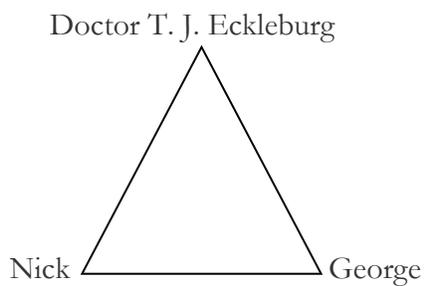
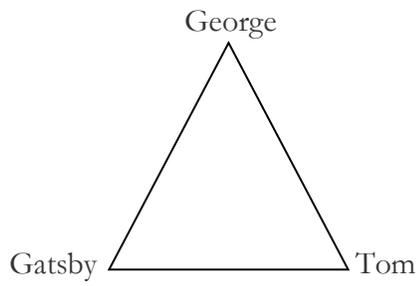
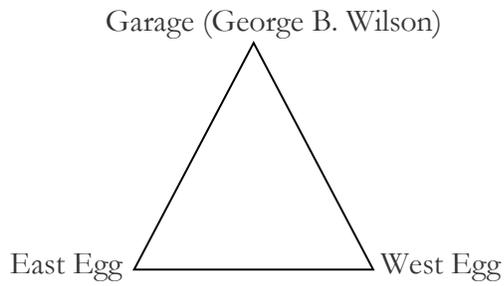
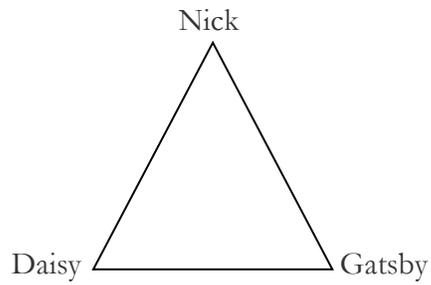
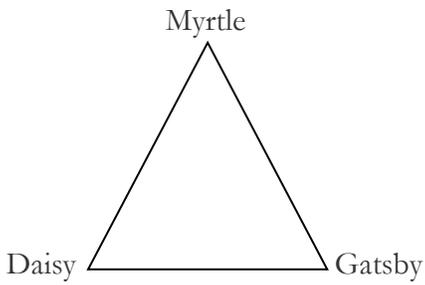
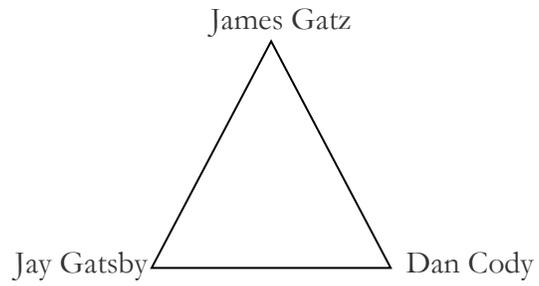
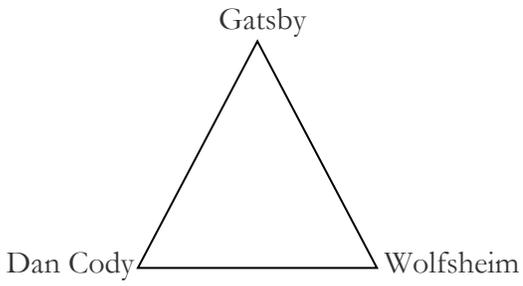
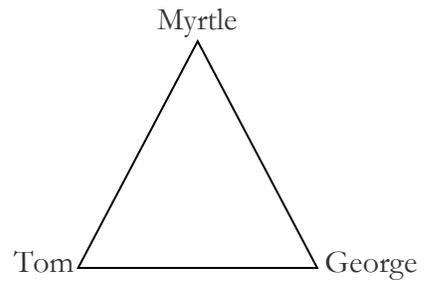
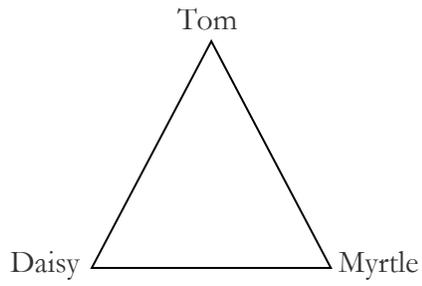
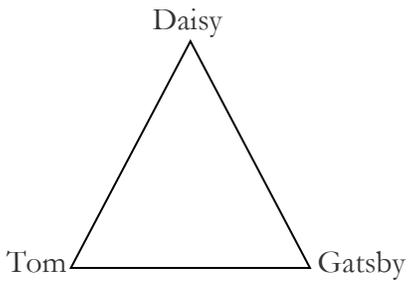
- (a) how the vertices relate to one another in each Δ , and
- (b) how the triangles themselves relate to one another.

You may use any persuasive thematic lens for your exploration. Be sure to adduce textual proofs to bolster your assertions.

Requirements: Title, Prose in Times New Roman 12, double-spaced, 900-1200 words.

Evaluation of your essay will depend on the following factors:

1. how **logically and persuasively** you have **connected textual "moments" to synthesize and propel your argument**,
2. how **nuanced your argument is** (Can it hold the tensions between textual occasions that support your thesis and those that don't?),
3. how **smoothly you transition** from idea to idea, sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph,
4. how **seamlessly you incorporate and cite lines of *The Great Gatsby*** within the body of your prose,
5. how **syntactically and grammatically coherent** your prose is,
6. how **deftly your argument demonstrates your understanding of the major themes of the novel** (class conflict, real vs. Platonic conceptions), and finally,
7. how **clearly and succinctly** (thereby **elegantly!**) you **translate your thoughts into writing**.
- 8.



PROMPT 3

Use your grasp of Platonic conceptions and the notions of the hyperreal, simulacra, and echolalia to elucidate the many fabrications of Gatsby. Select at least 3 key textual moments to flesh out your deliberation.

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Evaluation of your essay will depend on the following factors:

1. how **logically and persuasively** you have **connected textual “moments” to synthesize and propel your argument,**
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